

**Open Meeting Of The
Northern Ireland Food
Advisory Committee On 13
September at the Lough
Neagh Eel Fisherman's
Cooperative, Toome.**



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**OPEN MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND FOOD ADVISORY
COMMITTEE ON WEDNESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER – LOUGH NEAGH
FISHERMAN'S COOPERATIVE, TOOME.**

Agenda

- 1.00pm – Welcome and introductions
- 1.05pm – Minutes of the Open meeting of 14 June 2017
- 1.10pm – Shellfish – Debbie Sharpe
- 1.40pm – Chair's report and Director's Update
- 1.55pm – Animal Welfare – Julia Williams
- 2.25pm – EU Exit – Rod Ainsworth
- 2.55pm – Director's Annual Report to the Board – Maria Jennings
- 3.15pm – **AoB**
- 3.20pm – **Close**

**NIFAC MINUTES
OPEN MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE (NIFAC)
ON 14 JUNE 2017, 10:30AM, AT THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY, BELFAST.**

Those present:	FSA
<p><u>NIFAC members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colm McKenna – Chairman. • Aodhan O’Donnell. • Christine Kennedy. • Phelim O’Neill. • Elizabeth Mitchell. • Brian Smyth. • Colin Reid. <p><u>Apologies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Jennings • Seth Chanas <p>Guest Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charlotte Owen – FSA Social Science Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirsten Dunbar – NI Head of Food Hygiene Policy and Operations. • Roberta Ferson – NI Head of Finance Business Support and Communications. • Lisa Nelson – NIFAC Secretariat. <p><u>By Teleconference</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steve Wearne – Director of Policy. • Stuart Armstrong – Head of Food Chemical Safety Policy Unit. • Mark Willis – Head of Chemical Contaminants and Residues Branch. • Patrick Miller – Joint Head of Science Strategy and Governance. • Helen Atkinson – Principal Social Science Research Officer.

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1. The Chair welcomed all NIFAC members to the meeting, noting apologies from Maria Jennings and Seth Chanas.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 8 March 2017.

2.1. The members were content with the minutes from the previous meeting and it was

noted that the actions from the previous meeting had been completed.

3. Chair's Report and Director's Update.

- 3.1. The Chair updated the members on the recruitment process for two new Committee members: of the seven applicants that were interviewed, five were appointable. He noted that there were more applications than in previous trawls and most of the applicants were female. The appointments are currently with the Private Office at the Department of Health awaiting ratification from the new Health Minister when appointed.
- 3.2. The Chair informed the members that the Chair of the FSA Board would be visiting the Belfast office on the 15 June and would also be meeting the permanent secretaries of the Department of Health and DAERA, as well as a number of industry representatives.
- 3.3. The members were updated on the latest Audit Committee meeting and informed that the accounts had been signed off.
- 3.4. The Chair concluded with an update on recruitment for posts within the FSA executive management team and FSA Board.
- 3.5. Kirsten Dunbar updated the Committee on behalf of Maria Jennings on items from the Director's report contained in the meeting papers, including:
 - The successful conclusion of Operation Rosetta
 - Work on EU Exit legislation trawl
 - Online display of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)
 - A new initiative on dietary health
 - A Chinese delegation competent authority preliminary visit on BSE
- 3.6. The defendant in the Operation Rosetta case was found guilty and given a 14-month suspended sentence and the district council was awarded costs of £8000.
- 3.7. It was explained that the FSA in Northern Ireland were now fully engaged in the NICS EU legislation trawl. A project team had been set up and was being led by the FSA's solicitor.
- 3.8. The online display of the FHRS was out to consultation and due to close in July 2017. The FHRS team and council were commended on their work and it was noted that Northern Ireland compares favorably to England and Wales in this area.
- 3.9. The dietary health team is holding a Food Product Improvement Event on the 27 June. There is an exceptional line up of experts in the field of sugar reduction and reformulation with case studies and industry experts presenting the latest evidence and joining a panel for a Q&A session. NIFAC were cordially invited to attend.
- 3.10. FSA staff accompanied a delegation from China on tours of a feed mill and abattoir during a competent authority preliminary visit on BSE. The Agency was

commended on the low incident status achieved and encouraged to continue working to get the Chinese BSE ban lifted.

3.11. A question was asked about progress on the smarter communications project. The Committee was informed that the project was currently progressing through phase two and scoping for phase 3 about to commence..

3.12. The Committee commended the work of the Food Fraud Liaison Officer on the joint initiative with the PSNI on deer poaching and asked about the resources provided to the Food Crime Unit. They were assured the FSA Board was considering the issue.

4. Chemical Contaminants Principles

4.1. The Chair welcomed Steve Wearne, Mark Willis and Stuart Armstrong to the meeting by video-conference from Aviation House to introduce this paper, due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board. The presentation covered:

- The Agency's approach to managing chemical contaminant risks in food
- What chemical contaminants are and the main risks to businesses and consumers
- How risks are communicated to consumers
- Board responsibilities and the current risk framework

4.2. There then followed a discussion, during which the following points were made:

- The paper was welcomed, particularly the clear articulation of the roles of the Executive and the Board in this area.
- There is much to be learned from work being done in this area on the island of Ireland, such as the Feed Fortress initiative as developed by the animal feed sector and led by NIGTA. The model used in the animal feed sector was put forward as a useful template for others in the UK. It was unclear if this work had been properly investigated and considered by the FSA Board. It was recommended that this work should be considered and, if appropriate, replicated within the UK.
- There is also a concern about the level of engagement at a regional level with both stakeholders in the devolved regions and industry. The Agency was encouraged to engage and collaborate fully with others doing similar research.
- Concern was also expressed over the progress in this area during and after the EU exit process and it was suggested that reference to EU exit issues should be included.
- Current spending on research and funding on projects to increase consumer knowledge was questioned but the Committee was satisfied that this area was being given adequate resources.

4.3. The Chair thanked Steve Wearne, Mark Willis and Stuart Armstrong for their update.

5. Developing Our Approach to Identifying Risks and Issues Across the Food System

5.1. Steve Wearne introduced this paper via video-conference, due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board, and was joined by Patrick Millar. The presentation covered:

- Developing approaches to surveillance and horizon scanning
- The role of the new Science Council
- The complexities associated with this area of work

5.2. There then followed a discussion, during which the following points were made:

- The opportunity to feed into this area during the development stage was welcomed and it was requested that this approach be applied to other areas of the Agency's work so that the Committee and Board can have sight of plans and proposals at an earlier stage.
- Particular interest was expressed in the work of the newly-formed Science Council. While the role of the council was endorsed, the need for the devolved regions and industry to be adequately represented within the council was highlighted. NIFAC's assistance was offered if help was needed to identify partners of interest within Northern Ireland.
- The council was also encouraged to form partnerships and working relationships with organisations outside of the public sector.
- They also encouraged the wider executive management team to engage with the council as early as possible.
- Concerns were reiterated about a perceived lack of awareness within the FSA of relevant work going on at a regional level. It was recommended that the Agency engage more meaningfully with stakeholders, both within the public and private sectors, on areas of interest.

5.3. The Chair thanked Steve Wearne and Patrick Miller for their update.

6. Food and You – a Consumer Trends Survey on Food Safety Behaviour.

6.1. The Chair welcomed Helen Atkinson to the meeting by video conference to introduce the presentation. Charlotte Owen was also welcomed to the meeting to deliver the presentation. The presentation covered:

- Key findings from Wave 4 of the Food and You survey for Northern Ireland
- Comparisons with corresponding data from England and Wales
- Additional findings on healthy eating which were not included in the survey for England and Wales

6.2. There then followed a discussion, during which the following points were made:

- Great interest was expressed in the content of the presentation, as well as surprise over some of the figures in relation to food security and food hygiene practices in the home.
- Food security in Northern Ireland was identified as an area that would benefit from more focus. Members were assured that work in this area was being undertaken by the dietary health team, who were working with other stakeholders such as Safefood and the Food Poverty Network.
- It was suggested that the Food and You data could be utilised with existing Kantar and NDNS data to develop our understanding of consumer attitudes in key work areas.
- Interest was expressed in the choice of indicators used for the research and the drivers behind the statistics. It was acknowledged that the data was still relatively new, with more scope for analysis and identifying trends.
- The need to make sure the data is used to drive policy change and inform audience profiling was stressed. It was also recommended that the data be shared with all relevant stakeholders in the public and private sectors to maximize its value.
- Questions were asked about how the data was being used to inform the Agency's marketing activity and consumer messaging. It was noted that data suggested the food safety message within the home, as well as basic information on food poisoning, needed to be pushed. The members were assured that the data was already being used to inform consumer activity around Food Safety Week.

6.3. The Chair thanked Helen Atkinson and Charlotte Owen for the presentation.

7. Any Other Business (AOB)

7.1. The Chair made Committee members aware of upcoming appraisals and briefly explained the appraisal process which was due to be completed by the end of July. No further business was raised and the meeting was closed. The next open meeting will be held on 20 September.

TABLE OF ACTION POINTS

No	Action	To be actioned by	To be completed by
1.	Appraisal forms to be distributed to all Committee members		23 June

ACTION POINTS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

No	Date of meeting	Action	Target owner	Target completion date	Position
1.	14 June 2017	To make amendment and arrange for publication of the minutes of the NIFAC meeting on 16 November 2016.	Secretariat	24 April	<i>Completed</i>
2.	14 June 2017	To circulate the minutes of the Feed Stakeholder Meeting to NIFAC.	Secretariat	24 April	<i>Completed</i>

PAPER FOR INFORMATION

Shellfish

Executive Summary

Debbie Sharpe of the FSA in NI's Food Hygiene Policy & Operations team will deliver a presentation on the work carried in NI around shellfish controls. Slides to accompany this presentation will be tabled at the meeting.

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland

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PAPER FOR INFORMATION

**Update from Director for NI and Organisational Development to NIFAC
13 September 2017.**

Executive Summary

Attached is the FSA in NI Director's update to the Committee for June 2017. This report covers the period from 14 June to 6 September.

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/fsa170907.pdf>

- No action by members is necessary.

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Food Is Safe

BSE Negligible Risk Status

Following the World Organisation for Animal Health's ratification process and the unanimous EU vote on 4 July, the inclusion of NI and Scotland as BSE Negligible Risk regions was published in the OJ on 28 July and came into effect on that date. This means that some animal products previously disposed of as Category 1 animal by-product are now eligible to enter the food chain. Before being able to process animals under the new arrangements operators of approved slaughter and cutting establishments are required to prepare and agree standard operating procedures (SOPs) with the DAERA Official Veterinarian (OV). The Operational Policy & Delivery (OP&D) team has produced and circulated a Q&A fact sheet to communicate these changes to interested parties.

Investigation by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Into Unregistered FBO in Kesh

In April 2017 PSNI officers and EHOs from F&ODC discovered a skin-on deer along with 4 beef quarters in a shed at a private address in Kesh. In the shed were items of machinery consistent with those used in commercial butchery. In the subsequent condemnation hearing, the Justice of the Peace ordered the destruction of the deer and beef carcasses.

The suspect in this case declined to be interviewed. He was cautioned in late August for a number of offences related to not registering a food business, selling unsafe food and hygiene offences. He submitted a statement in which he denies being a food business operator, but states that he stores and supplies deer to a Scottish game dealer.

A prosecution file is being prepared by F&ODC.

Fipronil in Eggs

On 27 July 2017 the FSA became aware of concerns that the pesticide Fipronil had been used inappropriately in cleaning products on chicken farms in Holland, and that Fipronil had been detected in eggs there. Fipronil is not authorised for use as a veterinary medicine or pesticide for food producing animals. The FSA first became aware of distribution of some of the affected eggs to the UK on 5 August. Since then, the FSA has acted with urgency to ensure that consumers in the UK are protected. Investigations into the distribution of affected eggs and egg products is ongoing, and affected products within their shelf lives are being withdrawn by the businesses involved.

The number of eggs involved is very small in proportion to the number of eggs consumed in the UK, and risk assessments have concluded that, based on the levels of contamination, it's very unlikely that there is a risk to public health. The

FSA advises that there is no need for people to change the way they consume or cook eggs. The decision to withdraw the products is not due to food safety concerns, but is based on the fact that Fipronil is not authorised for use in food producing animals.

Testing of eggs on farms is underway across the UK, and all results to date show no exposure of UK eggs to Fipronil.

The FSA has provided regular updates on its website (www.food.gov.uk), and updates include details of the withdrawn products. Investigations continue, and the FSA is working closely with the European Commission, other Member States, other UK Government Departments, and industry stakeholders to ensure that consumers are protected.

Food Is What It Says It Is

Cattle Traceability

Further to the previous Director's update, the FSA in NI's Operational Policy & Delivery team held meetings with the Ulster Farmer's Union, Farmers For Action and the Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers' Association explaining the revised operational guidance on the acceptability of animals for slaughter and emphasising the need for comprehensive traceability to underpin food authenticity.

Gathering And Using Science, Evidence And Information

Launch of 'Eating Well Choosing Better'

On 27 June the FSA in NI launched the 'Eating Well Choosing Better' (EWCB) food product improvement programme. The programme was promoted to NI industry through a successful event which was held in collaboration with the Department of Health, Invest NI, knowledge providers and the District Councils. The event introduced the industry sugar reduction guidance which was published by Public Health England (PHE) in March 2017 to over 120 industry representatives from across the manufacturing, retail and out of home sectors. The aim of the event was to provide the NI food industry with information on the policy and explain the enhanced support and innovative solutions available in terms of finance, technical expertise and practical examples of success.

Delegates heard from the British Retail Consortium with their response to the sugar reduction guidance, practical examples and case studies from leading experts in the field of sugar reduction including Macphie and Kerry. Invest NI discussed the options for financial support which are available for SMEs undertaking food product improvement. The event concluded with an opportunity

for delegates to 'ask the expert' in a panel discussion which was chaired by Colm McKenna.

An evaluation of the event found that 94% of representatives noted improvement in awareness and understanding of food improvement, with 25% of businesses considering reformulation, 11% considering reduced portion size and 26% reviewing their product range to develop healthier products. The EWCB programme will continue to align with the PHE sugar reduction programme and recently announced calorie reduction plan.

Stochastic Modelling to Estimate the Potential Impact of Fortification of Flour With Folic Acid in the UK

On 16 August Food Standards Scotland published a report on 'Stochastic modelling to estimate the potential impact of fortification of flour with folic acid in the UK.' The work was jointly funded by Food Standards Scotland, the FSA in NI, the Welsh Government and Scottish Government.

Dietary modelling was carried out to establish the most effective way of adding folic acid to flour for the purpose of reducing Neural Tube Defects (NTDs) such as Spina Bifida in the unborn child. The modelling used current dietary information to explore the effect of different options for adding folic acid to flour while taking account of folic acid from fortified foods such as breakfast cereals and fat spreads, and from dietary supplements.

The modelling identified a number of beneficial fortification scenarios which would reduce NTDs, ensure no decrease in current average folate intakes and ensure no increase in numbers of people consuming too much folic acid. Depending on the scenarios modelled, the risk of NTDs could be reduced by between 8 and 25 % with no increase in the numbers of people consuming too much folic acid.

The research was discussed at the Food Standards Scotland Board meeting on 16th August 2017. The FSA in NI team has arranged a meeting in September with Department of Health colleagues to discuss the implications of the research on the current Northern Ireland folic acid policy.

Empowering Consumers

FHRS

Our consultation on The Food Hygiene Rating (Online Display) Regulations, which requires those businesses providing food by means of an online ordering facility to display an icon of a valid food hygiene rating on such a platform, ended on 14 July 2017. The consultation covered:

- the definition of an specified online facility and therefore businesses that fall within scope;
- detail of what needs to be displayed;
- detail on the location and manner of display; and
- the specified time period for publication of a rating online.

The consultation also presented the prototypes for the online display icon (see below). Nine responses were received to the consultation – five from district councils, three from industry and one from an industry representative organisation - all responses were broadly in favour of the draft regulations.

We are currently finalising the consultation response document and will notify NIFAC when this has been published. Following on from the consultation process the draft regulations will be submitted to the NI Assembly where they will be subject to the draft affirmative legislative process.

Prototype FHRS Icons:

Food Hygiene Rating 5

Download badges with FHRS ratings of 5:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/dvjet7m4gowmawc/AAA7rcRyevB58DF1d5OoqGcfa?dl=0>



We continue to work closely with all relevant stakeholders, particularly industry, in the development and testing of the online FHRS Icons.

Aligning Incentives

Regulating our Future

We continue to undertake a comprehensive programme of engagement on ROF with key delivery partners and other stakeholders in NI to provide updates on our proposals for the new Target Operating Model (TOM) and obtain insights to inform its development.

Presentations on the TOM have been given to staff in DAERA Agri-food Inspection Branch and Veterinary Public Health Programme, where the proposals have been positively received and welcomed.

An event for district councils was held in June 2017 at which the latest iteration of the TOM was considered in depth. There was support for our proposals on enhanced registration and segmentation though very strong views were expressed regarding the proposals for assurance, in particular the concept of the Certified Regulatory Auditor (CRA). The CRA concept was also considered inappropriate as it does not fit with the primary legislation that underpins the statutory FHRS scheme in NI, which would require amendment to accommodate the use of CRAs. We will continue to engage with district councils as the CRA concept is developed to explore this in a NI context.

We have ensured that colleagues in Department of Health are briefed regularly on the development of the TOM and they were invited to, and participated in, the LA event in June 2017, as were DAERA representatives. The TOM was also presented at a meeting of the FSA's NI Food Industry Liaison Group in June 2017. Industry members raised concerns regarding sustainable funding of the new model in the context of international competitiveness, the importance of official controls in providing confidence for export markets and the need to ensure alignment of regulatory standards across all countries of the UK.

EU Exit

Over the last number of months we have been engaging with, and listening to the concerns of, our stakeholders. We are fully integrated in the relevant FSA work streams to ensure that the interests of NI consumers, food and feed businesses and enforcement authorities are taken into account in our discussions. With thanks to Newry, Mourne and Down DC, a very informative fact-finding visit to a number of SMEs with significant cross-border trade was recently arranged for FSAs Head of EU Exit. We have also had a number of meetings with senior NI Civil Service officials to ensure that FSA in NI is represented in the relevant project work streams led by the EU Future Relations Division. We are currently identifying the required legislative fixes for Day 1, working closely with our Department of Health to ensure FSA legislation is factored in to the NI legislative timetable, and developing our Day 1 scenario plans.

Being The Best Organisation We Can Be

New Chief Operating Officer appointed

I am pleased to announce that Dr Colin Sullivan has been appointed as the Chief Operating Officer for the FSA. Colin, who was previously the lead civil servant for the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) public inquiry, will take up his role on 25 September.

Martin Evans, Glen Leat and John Lawrence who stepped in as interim Chief Operating Officer, Head of Field Operations and Head of Operational Assurance respectively will return to their previous roles.

Colin first trained as an optometrist in Yorkshire and then joined the NHS at the Birmingham & Midland Eye Hospital in 1984. After several years in practice including completing a PhD at Aston University, he moved into health service management working in a number of middle management roles at hospital, health authority and departmental levels. In 1999, he was appointed Director of NICARE (a self-funding consultancy unit of the Northern Ireland Health & Social Services) where he gained extensive project management experience working for DFID, EU and World Bank on health, social care and social security assignments in over 30 countries. In 2006, he became Director of Organisational Development & Corporate Services for the Central Services Agency (a support services body within Northern Ireland's Health & Social Services).

Colin joined the Senior Civil Service as Operations Director of the NI Social Security Agency in 2008 where he led the delivery of working age pensions and disability benefits. In 2011 he moved to be the Director for Universal Credit in Northern Ireland with responsibility for progressing the introduction of that radically new working age benefit. In 2013 he was promoted to Director of Strategic Policy & Reform within the NI Department of Finance where his duties have included being SRO for the devolution of Corporation Tax and NI lead for Public Sector Reform. From January 2017, he has also been lead civil servant for the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) public inquiry.

I'm delighted that Colin is taking up the role of Chief Operating Officer with his strong track record of delivering in senior and challenging roles.

Collaborative working with Rol colleagues

The OP&D team hosted the bi-annual meeting between DAFM, FSAI and DAERA on 5 July to discuss the implementation and delivery of meat policy issues of mutual interest.

Consolidation of TSE Regulations

A joint consultation exercise with DAERA on consolidation of the national TSE Regulations is due to commence late September for 8 weeks. The consolidation pulls together and enables a number of amendments to the EU TSE Regulations which have been implemented on an administrative basis since 2010.

Meat charging improvements

The DAERA invoicing system (HOMIF) which was re-written to implement the Stow proposals on meat charging discounts, was officially signed off by OP&D and the FSANI accountant.

Trade issues

OP&D continue to work closely with DAERA and Defra colleagues to open new markets and maintain existing markets for NI meat. This includes a significant contribution to recent inward visits to the UK from Chinese and Philippine authorities – as a result it was confirmed on 11 August that 2 slaughterhouses and

2 coldstores in NI had been approved to export pork to China and that on 9 August the UK (including NI) had been approved to export beef to the Philippines. OP&D will continue to work collaboratively with DAERA and Defra on the impending inspection visits by the USDA FSIS (September), by South Korean authorities (also in September) and by Taiwan authorities (October).

Collaborative working between DAERA, Defra, DCs and FSA

All of the wider Food Hygiene Policy & Operations (FHP&O) team continue to work closely with DAERA, Defra & DCs colleagues to ensure effective & efficient arrangements are in place between all relevant parties to maintain and promote the export of foods not of animal origin (FNAO) and fishery products, with particular emphasis on the arrangements for the new Chinese food safety requirements. FHP&O will continue to work collaboratively with Defra, DAERA and DCs on the forthcoming inspection visits by US FDA which will be concentrating on manufacturers of Grain/Bakery/Pasta/Cereal/Snack products.

M Jennings

Director for NI and Organisational Development.

PAPER FOR DISCUSSION

Animal Welfare

Executive Summary

Julia Williams, the FSA's Animal Welfare & Delivery Assurance Lead will join the meeting by teleconference to present a paper due to be discussed at the upcoming FSA Board meeting on activities in England and Wales on the FSA "Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce" programme to drive improvements in animal welfare standards in slaughterhouses.

The full paper and annexes can be found at the FSA's website:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/our-board/meetings/2017/010117/board-meeting-agenda-20-september-2017>

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland

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PAPER FOR DISCUSSION

Exiting the EU

Executive Summary

Rod Ainsworth will join the meeting by teleconference to deliver a presentation on a paper due to be considered at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board on the UK's exit from the EU. Due to the need for agreement on the content of this paper from the Department for Exiting the EU (DExEU), this paper is not currently available for circulation and will be distributed to members electronically, separately from this pack.

The full paper and supporting documents can be found at the FSA's website:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/our-board/meetings/2017/010117/board-meeting-agenda-20-september-2017>

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

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PAPER FOR DISCUSSION

Annual update the FSA Board from the Director for People and Organisational Change.

Executive Summary

Maria Jennings, the FSA's Director for People and Organisational Change will update members on the content of her annual report to the Board for their upcoming visit to Northern Ireland.

The full paper can be found at the FSA's website:

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

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